HIGH ART.

[Original.]

They sat within a little alcove, where
Some thoughtful hand had placed, ostensibly
To catch the eye of some art devotee,
A large portfolio of engravings rare.

Around them music throbbed and beauty smiled;
But still with wise and critical intent
Above this treasure-trove they gravely bent,
By every lesser treasure unbeguiled.

No doubt the pictures were beyond compare,
But once, between the portière's kindly fold
(Velvet, dull red, with arabesques of gold)
I caught a gracious glimpse of one more fair.

I saw swift, happy hands a moment meet,
Love's tender questions shining in his eyes,
And in her own I saw Love's glad replies—
It was the world-old story ever sweet.

I say, and never mortal can dissuade
Me from so thinking, that they did not see,
From lid to lid, though seeing critically,
So fair a picture as the one they made.

O! thoughtful matron, when you placed that book,
With all its riches of engraven page—
Cherub, madonna, sinner, saint and sage—
Within that very cosy curtained nook,

Tell me, I pray, was it discreetly planned—
Was it keen policy or pure sentiment,
Or was it only happy accident,
That made you play so into Cupid's hand?

CARLOTTA PERRY.

MILWAUKEE, May 20.

HALF A SHEET.

[Tinsley's Magazine.]

I.

Percy Fletcher is a young barrister. His "learned brethren" call him an "infernally lucky fellow," because, unlike so many of them, he is not briefless. But they forget that it is in a great measure due to his own abilities and hard work that his present position has been so quickly won. As regards appearance, he is tall and fairly good-looking; that is to say, his profile is a handsome one, but his full face is spoiled by his eyes, which are too small. His hair is light and curly, he shaves his mustache and only wears a pair of bushy whiskers. Not one man in a hundred would acknowledge him to be a "jolly-looking fellow," and yet it is a face that takes with ladies. Ask any of them what it is they admire, and hear what they will say: "He has such a glorious profile, and then his eyes—" "Why, his eyes are the very worst part about him." "Well, perhaps they are not what you call good, but there is something—I don't know exactly what—about them that I like, and then they look so nice when he screws them up," and this is all you will be able to learn. There was one young lady who, above all others, admired him, and who, some three months before the time we make his acquaintance, had given her promise to be the future Mrs. Fletcher. Her name was Mabel Linton, only child of old Linton, late of Lark Lane, now Derby Villa, Harrow, whose pride and pretensions were unbounded. He worshiped "Debrett" and the "Peerage," and his great ambition was to marry Mabel to a title. It can therefore be understood what a blow her engagement to Percy was. The intimacy, courtship and proposal had all taken place while Mabel was on a visit to her rich, childless aunt in Bayswater, and old Linton knew nothing about it until it was a fait accompli. The "rich, childless aunt" had a good deal to do with wringing a reluctant consent from Linton pere, for next to a title he loved money. Thus matters stood when two days before the April morning on which we make Percy's acquaintance Mabel's aunt had given a dance. Mabel and her father were to stay in the house for it, and Percy, of course, received an invitation. In due course he appeared in the ballroom, and was somewhat astonished to find his young lady whirling round the room in the arms of a stranger, more especially as he had told her he would come early, and asked her to keep the waltzes for him. As soon as the dance was over he went up to her and asked to look at her card.

"Why, Mabel, what's the meaning of this?" he inquired, as he saw the initial G. I. against four of the best waltzes. "I thought you had promised them to me?"

"So I had; it's all right—don't be angry, dear—take No. 9; it's only the lancers, but we shall have time to talk."

"Well, that will do to begin with, and then—" but Mabel was borne away on her partner's arm before he had time to finish. Percy's pride was hurt, and, in no very amiable frame of mind, he walked round the room until he discovered a cousin of his whom he had not met for some years. He sat down beside her, and then the thought struck him that he could pay Mabel out in her own coin, and he put his name down on his cousin's card for a good many dances. When No. 9 arrived, and he and Mabel had taken their places in the set, matters did not mend much, for, though Mabel appeared repentant and sorry, Percy was cold and haughty, and would not give her much chance of an explanation.

"You seem to have found a very agreeable acquaintance—I should say friend—this evening, Mabel. I don't think I have seen him before, have I? Ah! I see he's coming next to you in this set, so you will be able to continue your conversation. Don't mind me; you know we can talk any time."

"Oh! Percy, please don't say that; it isn't like you. Something has vexed you, I know; it is only a friend of papa's, Lord Gerland Ivor. He brought him with us this evening, and insisted on my dancing with him whenever he asked me. I thought you wouldn't mind, Percy, when you know it was papa's doing, not mine."

"Mind! Not a bit of it. Why should I? You of course are at liberty to dance with any one, just the same as I am."

"Percy, you are unjust and cruel. I have saved all the other waltzes for you."

"I am sorry to hear it, for I shan't be able to have them with you, as I am engaged for them all to that lady in blue you saw me dancing with just now."

Mabel only said, "Very well, dear, as you like; but I am so sorry."

Percy pretended not to hear, and directed his conversation to the lady on his left during the remainder of the set. On its conclusion he left Mabel in the conservatory on the plea of having to look for his next partner. As he walked away he congratulated himself that he had been as firm as a rock, and had taught Mabel a lesson that he was not to be treated in that manner, and yet all the time feeling very uncomfortable, and wishing he had made it up with her. For the remainder of the evening he danced with his cousin, until people began to notice the fact.

He did not see Mabel again till she was leaving the room on Lord Ivor's arm with her father on the other side. She gave him one pleading, loving look just as she was going through the doorway, which he pretended not to see. He did not stay long after her departure, and as he drove home to the Temple he began to have doubts whether he hadn't made a great fool of himself and whether he hadn't behaved badly toward her after all. The following morning he half made up his mind to run down to Harrow and make peace with her, but then the devil within him whispered that it would be showing a great want of firmness in so doing, and that it was her place, as the wrongdoer, to plead for forgiveness, and his, as the injured party, to grant it. And so he allowed the day to go by, hating himself and all the world, thoroughly wretched and ill at ease. He expected she would write, admitting her fault. But no letter came. And now, when we see him the second morning after the dance, he has been again disappointed. When he came from his bedroom he found three or four letters beside his plate, but none from Mabel. He is in a fix, and does not know what to do.

"It's her place to write, not mine," he tells himself, "and yet I'll be hanged if I go through such another day as yesterday for all the pride in the world; perhaps I was wrong after all, and it was her father's doing. Poor little darling, I was wrong, and it's no good saying I wasn't. I behaved like a brute; she didn't care for that fellow, I'll bet my life on it. I'll go down to Harrow to-day. By Jove! won't it be grand making up again, amantium iræ amoris, etc. Those old Latin dogs knew what spooning meant. But I won't stand any more of the old man's humbug, or he'll be making some real mischief. I'll run home as soon as I get a chance, talk it over with the governor, and see if we cannot arrange matters so that I can be married this 'Long'—Hullo, I hope that's not a summons for chambers," as there was a knock heard at his door. "Well, Rogers, what is it?" to his clerk, who entered.

"A parcel and a note, sir."

"Put the parcel on the table and give me the note; thank you, that will do."

"From Mabel, at last," he exclaimed, as he reads the direction in the hand that he knows so well. "I knew she'd write, and it was just as well I didn't go down yesterday, after all."

"What's this?" as he opened the sheet and reads as follows:

SIR—After your conduct toward me at Mrs. Lanehan's dance it is evident I have been mistaken in your affection for me; your studied rudeness was remarked by many, and, after what has occurred, it is clear that you wish our engagement to cease. Indeed, there is no other course left open, and the bearer of this will deliver a parcel containing the presents you have given me at various times. I may mention that my father quite approves of the course I am taking, and has seen this letter. Of course, we shall not expect to see you again at Harrow. I remain yours, etc.,

MABEL LINTON.

"Good heavens! she can't mean it!" is all he says as he finishes reading, and then sits gazing into the fire, lost in thought for a long while, without uttering a sound. Half an hour has passed before he rises with a deep sigh.

"Well, that's all over, I suppose, and she's no better than the rest of them. A real live lord is more attractive than a struggling commoner, and a coronet will send true love to the rightabout any day. But I didn't expect this of Mabel; I did think she was true grit. Where are these precious presents I was fool enough to waste my money on? What shall I do with them? Sell them? No; I don't think, after all, I could do that; they were hers once. No; I can't sell them. Confound it! I'm getting childish over them; there, go up on that shelf;" putting them in an unoccupied division of his bookcase; "you will serve as a memento where my love's been put, if I should ever want one; and now for those pleadings."

II.

Six months have passed since we saw Percy Fletcher last. And we are once again in his chambers. The long vacation is just over, and work has commenced again. It is evening and the curtains are drawn, a lighted lamp is on the table, and a bright fire in the grate. Percy is sitting where we first saw him, and, if we may judge by his appearance, the last few months have not been the happiest of his life. The lines round his mouth have deepened, and one or two crows' feet are beginning to show in the corners of his eyes; he has a careworn look, and altogether he seems aged. Opposite to him sits his one chum, Glassdale, also a barrister, who has just returned to town, and the two friends are talking over the events that have happened to each in the "Long." Glassdale has lately fallen a victim to his Cousin Millie Danvers' charms and is now pouring into Percy's ear a long detailed account of "how it all happened." Percy allows him to continue uninterruptedly until he has finished, and then offers his congratulations. Glassdale thanks him, and then continues: "When I was staying with my uncle's people lately at Brighton I saw Miss Linton. She was down there with her father, and Ivor was with them as their guest."

"Oh!" is all Percy's reply, but an anxious, inquiring look comes into his eyes which is quite at variance with the careless air he attempts to assume. "I spoke to her once or twice on the pier, and, do you know, it struck me she was greatly altered for the worse? She seems to have lost all her spirits, and she looks far from well."

"Poor little darling," mutters Percy under his breath, and then aloud: "I suppose she's engaged to Ivor by now? Not that it matters to me, though."

"No, she isn't; at least, I didn't hear anything about it. But he means it if ever a man did, and follows her about like a dog. I don't like that fellow, somehow."

"I should think not; he's a downright cad. He only wants her for her money; every one can see that," exclaims Percy, very warmly, and then, as if ashamed of displaying so much emotion, he suddenly changes the subject and inquires:

"And how did the old scoundrel, her father, seem?"

"Like a bear with a sore head. He will hardly speak civilly to anyone. It seems he's got himself into a regular hole over a law affair. His version of the matter is shortly this: He got some inkling that one of the waterworks companies were going to look out for a piece of land for a new reservoir somewhere near London. I forget exactly where he said it was. At any rate he went prowling about and found a piece belonging to a Mr. Boyer that would just suit them. Thereupon he entered into negotiations with that gentleman, and, as he affirms, came to terms, and received a letter accepting his offer of 6,000 pounds sterling for the field. The very day he received that letter Boyer was killed in a railway accident. Linton now applied to his executors to carry out the sale, and they laugh at him, believing it to be a mere 'try on,' as no vestige of anything relating to the transaction was found among Boyer's papers after his death, except Linton's letter making the offer. In the meantime the waterworks have applied for the land, and offered a good deal more than 6,000 pounds sterling, so it isn't very likely that the executors will let Linton have it, more especially—and this is the finest joke—old Linton can't find Boyer's letter accepting his offer which he asserts he received. You can imagine what the old ruffian's feelings are, seeing a good round sum slip through his fingers. He has hunted high and low for the letter, and he declares that someone might have stolen it, but my own idea is that it never existed save in his imagination. He even goes so far as to describe it, saying that it was written on a half sheet of paper only, and no crest or monogram on it. All this must have happened just about the time your engagement was broken off, which will account for your not having heard anything about it."

"Yes, I suppose it was about then; for I remember he was always talking about buying some piece of land, and what he was going to make out of it."

"But I say, Percy," continued Glassdale, "to change the subject, there is something I want you to do for me, and I hardly like to ask it."

"Fire away, old man; I'll do it if I can, you may be sure."

"Well, it's just this: "When you were engaged to Miss Linton, I believe you gave her among other things a locket of very peculiar shape and pattern. I admired it a good deal one evening when she was wearing it, and she told me that you had had it made for her. Now, I want to know if you would have any objection to telling me where you got it, so that I might get one made like it for Millie. Of course, if you have, say so at once, and I shall think no more of the matter."

"Not in the least, my dear fellow It is nothing to me now. Miss Linton sent all my presents back when the affair came to an end, and I should think that the locket is among them, and if so I shall be very glad to lend it to you to get one made like it. Here's the parcel. I put it up on that shelf the day they were returned, and have never touched it since."

And Percy cuts the string and undoes the brown paper wrapping.

"There you are; that's its case, and I think you'll find it inside," throwing a leather-covered box over the table to Glassdale.

"Hullo! What's this?" taking a sheet of writing-paper out of the parcel.

"Here's something I've never seen—excuse me a moment." Percy reads for a moment or two, and then drops into a chair and covers his face with his hands, uttering not a sound.

"My dear fellow, what's the matter?" eagerly inquired Glassdale. "No bad news, I hope?"

"Bad news? No; the very best news I ever had in my life, and it has been hidden from me for six months. What will my little girl think of me? Just listen to this:

"'Take no notice, darling of the letter you will get with this. Papa makes me write it. I don't mean a word of it. Be true to me as I am to you. Send a line to say you forgive me. No time for more; he's com—'

"Look at it, all crumpled up, anyhow, and shoved in under one of the cases, so that he might not see it. It's clear as mud, she must have written that when he wasn't looking. Read it yourself, old man, and give me joy."

And Glassdale takes the letter, and having read it through, turns it over.

"Why, there's some writing on the other side; she must have seized on the first piece of paper she could find. May I read it?"

"Of course you may; go on."

Glassdale scans the writing for a moment or two and then bursts out—

"By the holy pokers! it never rains but it pours. You are in luck's way to-night; just listen to this:

2nd April, 187—.

DEAR SIR: In answer to your letter just received making an offer of 6,000 pounds sterling for the Holm Meadow, I beg to say that I am willing to accept that sum, and if you will call on my solicitors, Messrs. Grayburn & Reeves, Redford row, on Friday morning next at 12:30 I will meet you there, and a proper contract can be drawn up. Yours truly, JAMES BOYER.

"There, my dear fellow! you've got the game in your hands now. That's the identical letter that old Linton is worrying himself into his grave about. Give him that and he'll do anything for you, I know."

"Oh, never mind that letter; it's the one from Mabel that I'm thinking about."

"Yes; that's all very well, but look what a pull the letter on the other side gives you. Taking the two together, the old ruffian is bound to cave in. She must have been in his study when she was packing up your parcel, and have taken the first blank sheet of paper she saw off his desk; probably the letter was face downward, so she wouldn't see the writing on the other side."

"Yes; I fancy you are right, but to-morrow morning shall explain everything. And to think that all this time has been wasted through my not opening the parcel."

"Well, I must go now," says Glassdale, rising. "It's getting awfully late, and you'll like to be alone, I fancy. I know I should. But you'll let me take the locket, won't you; I'll bring it you back safe."

"Take the locket by all means, my dear old boy, but let me have it back soon, for I intend it shall revert to its proper owner very shortly. And thank you awfully for what you have done for me; if it hadn't been for you I should still have been the miserable fellow I was half an hour ago, instead of one of the happiest men under the sun."

"Moon, you mean, considering the time of night. Well, good-bye and good luck to you; when I see you again I shall expect to hear that everything is arranged satisfactorily on the old footing."

III.

"How shall I manage to catch her alone? The old fellow won't let me enter the house if he knows anything about it, that's certain. Let me see—" and Percy remains in deep thought until the train runs under the bridge and comes to a standstill opposite the platform at Harrow. His mind is evidently made up now—there is no hesitation or doubt visible in his face as he strides away toward the hill at the foot of which lies the Lintons' abode. But before he arrives there he leaves the road and clambers over a gate into a grass field. This he crosses, and, jumping the boundary hedge, finds himself in another field that runs at the back of the villa garden. Keeping as much out of sight as possible, he gains the high garden palings. In places the weather has warped and twisted the oaken strips somewhat, leaving interstices through which he can watch all that is going on on the other side without being seen himself. He has not long to wait. Mabel is walking up and down the garden reading a book, and he notices an alteration in her since he saw her last at her aunt's dance. The merry, laughing light in her eyes has disappeared and a care-worn, weary expression has taken its place. The light-hearted girl seems to have been merged in the thoughtful and harassed woman. But she has turned down the side path now and must pass within a few feet of him. His heart beats till he can almost hear it, his breath comes short and fast and he trembles violently as he watches her approach. The moment has come—a step or two backward—a short run—a scramble, and he is standing on the path in front of her.

"Percy!" is all she says; but her face turns ashy pale and she trembles violently. The shock is too much for her, and she would fall did he not catch her in his arms. He half leads, half carries her to a seat that is close by, and, placing her on it, fans her with his hat until she recovers a little.

"My poor darling, can you ever forgive me all the pain and misery I have caused you?" he asks; "what must you have thought of me, never having been near you all this time?"

"Oh! Percy, papa! He'll see you. He's in the drawing-room. You shouldn't have come."

"Never mind papa, darling; leave him to me. He'll be glad enough to see me, I'm sure. But are you? I must know that first."

"There is no need to ask, is there, Percy?" And her rosy cheeks and smiling eyes speak more eloquently than her lips, those lips which are immediately silenced after a lover's fashion.

"But stay, before I say another word, tell me is this true I hear of you—are you engaged to Lord Ivor? Tell me plainly, child. If it is as they say, it is only a just punishment on me, and I must bear it."

"I engaged to Lord Ivor? No, I never could be engaged to any one—"

"Except me," he interrupts. "Thank God for that. I might have known it all along, and so I should have done if I had only seen your letter."

"Seen my letter."

"Yes, the one inside the parcel of presents. The one you sent separately I never can call yours. It was your father's."

"But didn't you see the other?"

"Never until last night. I put the parcel away on a shelf unopened, where it would have been now had it not been for an accident. Can you forgive my conduct, knowing this?"

"Forgive? Aye! freely, if I have anything to forgive. At first I thought there must be some mistake, and then I remembered what took place at the ball, and I thought then that you were angry, and that you intended everything should be over between us, for I did try you I know that evening. At first it was not my fault. Lord Ivor was papa's friend, and it was my duty to dance with him, more especially as papa had told me to do so. And then when I saw you were angry, and a little unreasonable—and you must admit that, dear—I determined to punish you for a time, but only for a dance or two. I never intended we should part that night anything but friends. And then when I saw you with that lady in blue I was a little angry and hurt, and I went on all the more. So you see, dear, you have to forgive as well as I."

"Whatever there may be, darling, it is forgiven long ago, and as for the lady in blue, she was my cousin, only I took care you should not know it at the time, and I have never seen her from that evening. Let us blot that miserable time out of our minds at once and forever. And now tell me about Lord Ivor."

"I have little to tell you, except that he was kind enough to ask me to marry him, and I have said no. He is a gentleman in every sense of the word and took my answer at once, and I don't suppose I shall ever see him again. We said good-bye at Brighton, so I think, dear, we may blot him out too, as he has indirectly been the cause of all we have suffered. Have you suffered, Percy? But, there, I won't tease you. I have no wish to lose you again now that I—"

"So, sir! Perhaps you'll have the goodness to tell me what all this means?" And Mr. Linton suddenly stands before the astonished lovers, almost bursting with suppressed indignation and rage. His face is purple, his eyes starting out of his head, and his fingers nervously clasping a thick oak stick, as if he meditated an immediate attack on the subject of his wrath. He had approached round the bushes unobserved by either of them. "I have an idea that my daughter wrote you a letter some months since, returning you the presents you had done her the honor to give her, and at the same time putting an end to your engagement; also intimating that your future presence at this house was neither expected nor desired. Was that not so? If I am wrong, pray correct me. And yet I now find you with my daughter in a position that demands an instant explanation."

For when Mr. Linton appeared so suddenly Percy's arm was around Mabel's waist, his disengaged hand had made close prisoners of both of hers, and the two were sitting rather closer together than the size of the garden-seat led one to suppose was actually necessary.

"Sir," commenced Percy rising and standing totally unabashed by the little man's virtuous indignation, while the laughter that sparkles in his eyes shows that he feels himself master of the situation, and is meditating some prank—"all that you have stated is perfectly correct, but there are times when it is every man's duty to lay aside all personal feelings, and undertake a duty however disagreeable it may be, in order to benefit his fellow-man. Such is my case at the present moment."

"Pray, sir, have the goodness to cease this tomfoolery, and leave my garden this instant. How you entered it I am not in a position to say, but I strongly suspect you clambered over the fence, in which case you have laid yourself open to a criminal prosecution. But let that pass, and leave my premises this instant? Do you hear me, sir?"

"I do, sir; and if I followed your instructions you would regret this moment to the end of your life. I repeat, sir, that there are times when it—"

"Will you leave my grounds, sir?"

"No, I will not, until you have heard what I have come to tell you."

"Then I will have you turned out."

"Excuse, me, sir, but I don't think you will. It's all right, darling," turning to Mabel, who is pulling his coat-tails, endeavoring to induce him to stop. "Mr. Linton is naturally a little bit surprised at seeing me so unexpectedly, and I quite understand his irritation and overlook it, but I can assure you, dear, we shall not part until we are the best of friends possible."

"Sir!" yells the little man, almost white with passion, "you had the impertinence—the gross impertinence—to address my daughter as your darling and your dear."

"I did so, sir, and I am proud and delighted to feel I have a warrant for so doing. But, as I said before, it is my duty to put all personal feelings aside, and come at once to business."

"Your business is at once to leave these premises, and if you don't get out I'll kick you out—there!"

"My dear, sir, pray be calm; such excitement as this cannot be good for you. But to proceed—"

"Out of the garden."

"No, to business. I have been informed that you are at present engaged in a lawsuit, in which your chances of success at this moment are anything but rosy. Now, sir, supposing—mind, I only say supposing—I were in a position to make your chance of a verdict absolute certainty, what would you say to me then?"

The little man's face undergoes a complete change at these words, his eyes glisten, and his stern and wrathful expression relaxes.

"If you could only afford me some information as to the whereabouts of the letter I have lost I should look upon you as the dearest friend—," and then, as if remembering who he is addressing, his face assumes its former angry look, as he bursts forth afresh: "But this is all nonsense. I know you well enough. It's a mere excuse to remain in this garden. But, sir, understand, once for all, I won't have it. So, clear out at once. And, Mabel, you come with me. I am surprised and excessively annoyed to find you talking to this—this gentleman."

"Stay a moment, Mr. Linton, if you please, and let us come to an understanding. I give you my word of honor that I can be of material service to you in this matter. But I shall require of you some reward. Are you prepared to give it? Yes or no?"

The little man now begins to see from Percy's manner that it is not a joke, and that he is in sober earnest.

"Well, sir, if you can prove your words you will not find me ungrateful, I think. How much shall you require?"

"Not one farthing of money, only the hand of your daughter."

This calm request once more upset the equanimity of Mr. Linton, and he is just about to break out again when Percy stops him with, "Gently, sir, gently! remember we are talking business now. Do you agree to my terms? Otherwise we need not prolong this interview."

Mr. Linton seems unwilling to allow the business to end thus, and yet is hardly prepared to capitulate so unconditionally.

"Well, sir, you see in this matter I am not the chief person concerned; my daughter's happiness is involved."

"If that is your only objection I think you may make your mind easy. What do you say, Mabel? Will you allow your hand to be the price of the information I possess?"

Mabel's answer is clearly in the affirmative, for she rises at once and places both her hands in Percy's without saying a word.

"You see, sir. Have you any further objection to make?"

"No; if my daughter is willing to make a sacrifice for her father's sake I shall not forbid her. I had other plans for her future, but they seem likely to fall through, so I have nothing further to say except that the sooner you enlighten me on this mysterious matter the better I shall be pleased."

"Quite so, my dear sir; I will keep you no longer in suspense," and Percy draws a letter from his pocket and hands it to Mr. Linton. "Will that be of any service to you, do you think?"

Mr. Linton glances at it for a moment. "Good heavens! The letter I have been searching for all this time; now I've got 'em. I must win now; nothing can prevent it. The game's in my own hands; this is grand. But, my dear Fletcher, how came this letter in your possession and what was the reason of your keeping it concealed for so long?"

"Mabel here will be able to answer your first question, I think, if you will show her the letter, and as to the second I was unaware that I had it until last evening. Look at it, Mabel, and tell us what you know about it," handing her the letter which he takes from Mr. Linton, at the same time turning it over so that she may see her own handwriting. She starts and her cheeks are the color of poppies in an instant. "Oh! Percy," she gasps, "I hadn't a notion of this. How could I have been so stupid? But I remember I was in papa's study when I packed the things up, and in a great hurry for fear he should come back, and I seized the first bit of paper I could lay my hands on, and I suppose I took this by mistake."

"Well, dear, it will be a lesson to you in future not to return the presents I give you," says Percy, laughingly.

"Why, child, what is the meaning of all this? What have you been doing?"

"Papa, I must confess; I have been the culprit all along. When I sent back Percy's presents I put a little note in of my own besides the one you made me write; and I stole a piece of paper from your desk to write it on, and I think I must have taken this letter by mistake; I am very sorrow."

"You little baggage, and so I have got to thank you for all my anxiety and worry; well, I shan't be angry since it has all come right in the end. But I am inclined to feel very grateful to Fletcher for offering to relieve me of such a dangerous party before you do me any worse mischief. But come into the house now, and we'll drink confusion to old Boyer's executors.

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Time has hurried on since that morning when we saw the trio in the garden at Harrow. Old Linton did win his case, and the other evening, when I was dining with Percy, I observed that his wife was wearing a locket of a very peculiar pattern.

One of Prince Bismarck's characteristics is his love for some large dog which he makes his constant companion and feeds himself—a dog, for instance, like the one that so terrified Prince Gortschakoff. The dog follows the chancellor into the dining-room and stretches itself on the carpet. In the course of the meal the butler brings a large piece of boiled beef on one plate and bits of soaked bread on another. The prince in person cuts up the beef and prepares the food for the dog, which stands by, grave and attentive, pending the solemn preparation of its food. The prince's dog is never fed in any other way. There is something noteworthy in the habits of this man, who personifies the Prussian race in its most elevated character.

An esteemed contemporary explains that it costs 42 cents to stop a railway-train. That depends upon how it is stopped. If stopped by another train it costs considerably more.

THE CATHEDRALS.

MEXICO'S CHURCH EDIFICES AND THE WONDERS THEREOF.

Grand Cathedral of the City of Mexico—Cathedrals of Pueblo and Santa Guadalupe—Rich Ornaments, Jewels and Vestments.

[Emily Pierce in Frank Leslie's.]

It is a fact, frankly acknowledged, that the Roman Catholic church in Mexico is now surrounded by the ruins only of its former greatness. Fifty years ago this opulent institution owned over three-fifths of the City of Mexico. The income of the archbishop was greater than that of the queen of England. In 1827 there were 150 convents and monasteries in Mexico. One-tenth of the products of the country went to the clergy as tithes. The estimated value of church property in 1859 was $300,000,000, one-third of the entire property of the nation. In the City of Mexico there were 5,000 houses, valued at $80,000,000, of which the church owned more than one-half. Domes rose in every block, the cross was lifted upon every hand. The annual income of the church in the City of Mexico was $20,000,000, while that of the republic was only $18,000,000. The clergy in the city of Puebla held mortgages on farms, in that state alone, to the amount of $40,000,000. Between Puebla and Apizaco, a distance of thirty miles, were 124 churches, and the valley of Puebla numbered 365—one for each day in the year.

The grand cathedral stands upon the site of the Aztec Teocalli; it covers a space of 426 by 500 feet, and its high altar, which is in the center of the edifice, is above the spot once occupied by the sacrificial stone. The choir is one mass of elaborate carvings; extending around it, and leading to the high altar, probably 200 feet, is a railing of lumbago, manufactured in China, and weighing twenty-six tons. It is a brassy-looking metal, composed of gold, silver, and a small alloy of copper, but containing so much gold that an offer has been made to replace it with pure silver, and give many thousand dollars in addition. The altar itself, placed upon a marble platform, is of wrought and polished silver, and the whole surmounted by a small temple, in which formerly rested the figure of the Virgin of Remedios, who was dressed in three petticoats—one embroidered with pearls, another with emeralds, and a third with diamonds, the value of which was over $3,000,000. This was only one part of one church in Mexico, and that said not to be the richest.

I dropped into the sacristy one day, and found two or three padres indulging in a quiet chat after mass. They politely volunteered to show me the magnificent set of vestments worked for the cathedral by command of Isabella of Spain. They are of cloth-of-gold, incrusted with gems, and with passages of holy writ, so exquisitely worked in silk that it required the closest inspection for my woman's eyes to discover traces of the needle. These gorgeous vestments are useless for practical purposes being so heavy that no man of ordinary dimensions could sustain their enormous weight, during mass, or even long enough to pronounce the benediction.

The cathedral of Puebla is the best specimen of architecture I have seen in Mexico. The material is blue basalt, and the massive buttresses and lofty towers without, the noble arches and artistic pillars within, give a dignity and solidity often lacking. A favorite legend tells us that while in process of building, this cathedral gained mysteriously in height during the night exactly as much as the masons had accomplished during the day. This was said to be the work of two angels who came down from heaven, and wrought with golden trowels in their hands, hence the city acquired the name of "Puebla de los Angelos" (the City of the Angels).

Here, the great altar affords the finest display of Mexican marbles in the republic, and beneath it is the sepulcher of the bishops. Before the revolution there depended from the center of the vast dome an enormous chandelier—a mass of gold and silver weighing tons; one may imagine its value from the fact that the cost of cleaning it alone amounted to $4,000. Here the candelabra were of gold, and so ponderous that a strong man could not lift them; the value of the jewels was of historic notoriety, and an image of the Virgin boasted a zone of diamonds valued at $1,000,000.

The cathedral of Santa Guadalupe is the most famous in Mexico, and was once the richest and most venerated shrine; but the grand old Indian president, Benito Juarez, confiscated most of its gold and silver ornaments, and coined them into money, to carry on his war against the church party. Even the frame of solid gold which surrounded the patron saint was taken, but this was afterward returned. The altar railing, weighing tons, is of solid silver. This alone, of all the sumptuous church fixtures, was spared by the Liberals.

Courting by Note.

[Greensboro (Ga.) Journal.]

Greensboro has a certain young gentleman who is remarkable for his originality. He has lately been enchained in the silken fetters of Cupid, and thoughts of the fair enchantress constantly filled his mind. He has a special book in which, during the week, he notes down the thoughts which occur to him about his lady love. When Sunday comes he visits her, armed with the note book, and proceeds to read therefrom the most tender expressions which have occurred to him from time to time. This can really be called courting by note.